

held up when we have a deadline of April 28 and we have people out there worried about chemical weapons and how you destroy them. We have the answer under this piece of legislation, but we cannot go forward with it.

Mr. President, I hope you will listen to my friend from New Mexico, that there is going to be an effort to bring this piece of legislation up because of the deadline. If we worried about deadlines, we would have a budget. We do not have a budget. But this is an international treaty, and it has a deadline. And for one, I do not want to miss it because of the chemical weapons that need to be destroyed and the way they are to be destroyed so that we might protect your constituents.

I yield the floor.

Mr. DURBIN addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I seek recognition under the time allocated to Senator DASCHLE in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator has up to 60 minutes.

Mr. DURBIN. I thank the Chair.

COMPREHENSIVE CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, over the last several days of debate in this Chamber we have heard those who favored the appointment of a special counsel say that time is of the essence, and that we should move forward and ask the Attorney General to make this appointment as quickly as possible. In fact, they were so determined to pass this resolution as a bon voyage gift to the President as he heads off to the Helsinki summit that we had to vote today. Today, before the President left, we had to make certain that this gesture was made. Many of us felt this was unnecessary and ill-timed and, frankly, unprecedented, that this type of embarrassment would be directed at the President as he left our shores to head off for a critical summit with the only other superpower with nuclear weapons in the world. And yet those who prevailed on the majority side were convinced that time was of the essence: let us move forward and do it now.

Catching that spirit, I come before the Senate today with the suggestion that we not stop with this resolution but go even further and plumb the depths of the real problem that we are examining here. It goes beyond the 1996 Presidential campaign. It goes beyond the Democratic Party. What we are focusing on is our very campaign finance system itself as used by Presidential candidates, congressional candidates, Democrats and, yes, Republicans.

And so today I am hoping that that same sense of urgency, that same commitment to truth, and that same perseverance that we find changes to win back the confidence of the American people will be demonstrated when I call a resolution before this body in a few moments.

You see, Mr. President, those who follow Federal election campaigns know that there have been some dramatic changes over the last few decades. Federal election campaign costs have increased from an estimated \$2.65 billion in the 1996 cycle—that is a threefold increase over campaign spending just 20 years ago even adjusting for inflation—\$2.6 billion on our campaigns. In the 1995-96 election cycle, the Democratic Party committees raised \$332 million, a 73-percent increase over the \$192 million raised just 4 years before. The Republicans outdid us, as usual, raising \$549 million, a 74-percent increase over the \$316 million that they raised 4 years earlier.

Take a look at congressional races. In 1976, all congressional races in the United States cost \$99 million. By 1996, 20 years later, that \$99 million had mushroomed to \$626 million—more than a sixfold increase.

Soft money. Well, for those who do not follow this closely, it may be a curiosity to use these terms “hard money” and “soft money,” but politicians know what it is all about. Soft money is kind of the mystery money in politics. And has it grown. Take a look at the fact that since 1992, the amount of soft money in campaigns has tripled, from \$86 million to \$263 million.

Stepping aside from the whole debate about the nature of campaigns and whether they are too negative, too personal and too nasty, most everyone will concede that we are plowing more and more money into our political campaigns in America.

There is a curious thing that has to be noted, though. As political campaigns have become longer, more expensive, and more negative, voters have apparently decided not to participate in elections. Consider this. Between 1948 and 1968, 60 percent of the electorate showed up to vote in a Presidential election. Then from 1972 to 1992, we saw a 53 percent turnout, a decline after Watergate. Listen to what happened in 1996, the most expensive Federal election in our history for congressional candidates, senatorial candidates and Presidential candidates, heaping dollar upon dollar in this election process. The voters out there listened carefully and a majority of them decided to stay home. So, for the first time since 1948, we had fewer than 50 percent of the electorate turning out to vote in a Presidential election; 49 percent of the electorate turned out. Is it not interesting that the more money we plow into our election campaigns, the fewer voters turn out?

Consider if you had a company and you were designing a marketing program and you went to the owners of the company and said, “We have just got the statistics and information back. After we spent millions of dollars on advertising, people are buying fewer products.” It might raise some serious questions. Maybe your advertising campaign is not what it should be—and I think the voters tell us that when

they see negative ads. But perhaps the fact that you are spending more on advertising is not helping the low regard people have for your product. In this case, the voters told us, in 1996, in the November election, that they had a pretty low regard for the product, the candidates, all of us.

I think there is a message here, an important message about the future of this democracy. We can talk about special investigations: Did someone violate the law in 1996, Democrat or Republican, and should we hold them accountable if they did? But if we do not get down to the root cause of the problem here, if we do not address what I consider to be the serious issue of campaign finance reform, I can guarantee the cynicism and skepticism among voters will just increase. So, we have heard a lot of talk today about the sense of urgency and the need to deal quickly with this whole question of campaign finance reform. Some of my colleagues have said, “Oh, don’t move too quickly now; let us make sure we make the right changes.”

Let me show a little illustration. How much time have we spent on the issue of campaign finance reform in the last 10 years? Mr. President, 6,742 pages of hearings; 3,361 floor speeches—add one for this one today; 2,748 pages of reports from the Congressional Research Service, 1,063 pages of committee reports; 113 votes in the Senate; 522 witnesses; 49 days of testimony; 29 sets of hearings by 8 different congressional committees; 17 filibusters; 8 cloture votes on one bill; 1 Senator arrested and dragged to the floor—with bodily injury, I might add—and 15 reports issued by 6 different congressional committees. And what do we have to show for it? Nada, zero, zilch, nothing. What we have to show for it is the call for an independent counsel to determine whether someone has violated the laws under the current system. I think there is a lot more to this.

I hope my colleagues join me in believing that if this process of investigation does not lead to reform, the American people will be disappointed. It is one thing to be hyperinflated with moral rectitude about the violations of campaign law. But that is not enough. Just cataloging the sins of the current system, that is not enough. The real test is whether we are prepared to change the system, reform the law, and return public confidence to our democratic process.

There are a lot of options out there. One of those that is frequently spoken of is the McCain-Feingold legislation, I believe the only bipartisan campaign reform bill before us. Two Republican Senators and, I believe, 22 Democratic Senators have come together in an effort to have campaign finance reform. I have cosponsored it. It may not be the best, or the only, but it is a good one. We should consider it as a starting point in the debate.

Yesterday, my colleague from Minnesota, Senator WELLSTONE, Senator

KERRY of Massachusetts, and others announced agreement to introduce a plan modeled after the Maine election law reform. It is a very interesting proposal which would really deflate the money in politics. Senator WELLSTONE is here to join me in this debate and describe that bill and his own thoughts on that subject.

There are lots of ideas, good ideas. We have to really dedicate ourselves with the same sense of urgency and with the same passion to reforming the system that we are dedicated to investigating wrongdoing under the current political finance system.

At this point, I yield to my colleague from Minnesota.

Mr. WELLSTONE. I thank the Senator from Illinois.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Does the Senator seek recognition in his own right?

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, I do seek recognition.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator is speaking within the 60 minutes?

Mr. WELLSTONE. Of course, the Senator will stay within the 60 minutes. And, I say to my colleague from Oklahoma, far less than 60 minutes. I just wanted to add a couple of things to what the Senator from Illinois has just said.

First of all, I really appreciate the emphasis of the Senator from Illinois on representative democracy in our country. I think this is the central issue for this Congress. I think this is the most important issue in American politics. I have spoken before on the floor of the Senate about this. I am not going to repeat what I have said already.

But I really think, if we want to have people engaged in the political process, if we want people to register to vote and vote in elections, if we want people to believe in our political process, if we want people to believe in us, then I think we absolutely have to deal with this awful mix of money and politics. Because regular people—which I use in a positive way—in Illinois and Minnesota and Oklahoma and around the country, know that, No. 1, too much money is spent on these campaigns; No. 2, some people count more than others and there is too much special interest access and influence; No. 3, there is too much of a money chase and Senators from both political parties have to spend entirely too much time raising money.

I just ran for office. I had to raise the money.

And, No. 4, I think people in the country know that it is getting dangerously close to the point where either you are a millionaire yourself, or you have to be very dependent upon those that have the hugest amounts of capital for these expensive capital-intensive TV campaigns. Otherwise, you are disqualified.

In a democracy, people should not be, de facto, disqualified because they are not wealthy or because they do not

have access to those people who have the wealth or the economical clout or the political clout in America. That turns the very idea of representative democracy on its head. That takes the very goodness of our country and turns it on its head. That takes the American dream and turns it on its head. I have said it before, but it is worth repeating, that if you believe in the standard that each person ought to count as one and no more than one, then you would be for reform.

My last point, because I could talk about this for a long, long time, my colleague was kind enough to mention the McCain-Feingold bill. He was kind enough to mention the bill that yesterday we agreed to introduce, Senator KERRY and I, and Senator GLENN and Senator REID; and Senator BUMPERS was there as well.

Mr. President, the point today is as follows. I think people—unfortunately, but the proof is going to be in eating the pudding—believe that what is going on in the Congress amounts to little more than symbolic politics. I think people believe we are going to have a committee investigation, an attempt to move some of these issues to the Rules Committee, maybe try and bury this here, maybe have hearings and hearings and hearings, then have a variety of different charges or countercharges made, maybe more polarization, maybe more accusations. Then, after all is said and done, it will be the same moving picture shown over and over and over again, where you have hearings, speeches, reports, witnesses, you name it, followed by the same hearings, the same speeches, the same calls to action, the same kind of investigations, followed by inaction. I do not understand, for the life of me, why we do not move forward. I think the purpose of this resolution is to say, set a date.

A good friend of mine, Jim Hightower, who was great on the Ag Committee, loves to say, “You don’t have to be ‘Who’s Who’ to know what’s what.” People in this country have figured this out. It is time for reform. We know more than enough about what is wrong. We know more than enough about what is wrong with this game, the ways it is broken, and it is time to fix it.

So this resolution calls for a date certain. It is right on mark, and I am proud to support it.

Mr. DORGAN addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota.

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, I rise also to support the unanimous-consent request that will be propounded by the Senator from Illinois.

Almost the first question from our constituents that all of us, I suppose, when we reach the airport going back to our States, confront is, “Well, what are you working on?” I know what I would like to be working on. A moment ago we talked about the need for this Senate to work on the chemical weap-

ons treaty, a treaty that has been in the works for a number of years, has been signed by many countries, and would end the spread of poisonous gas around our world and make this a safer world. I would like to be working on that, but we cannot get it to the floor of the Senate. I hope it will get here soon. The power of scheduling, of course, is not on this side of the aisle.

The Senator from Illinois raises the other issue that I would like for us to be working on, and that is the issue of campaign finance reform. No one who has been paying attention in this country can fail to understand the need for us to consider campaign finance reform. The Senator from Illinois is simply raising the question, and a recommendation is implicit, to say we would like, by a date certain, to have a commitment to consider campaign finance reform on the floor of the Senate. That is what the Senator from the State of Illinois is saying to the Senate with his resolution, a resolution that I think is timely, one that I support and one that I hope will allow us to reach an agreement with the majority party on a date certain to bring campaign finance reform to the floor of the Senate.

The Senator from Illinois held up a chart that shows the number of hearings that have been held, the number of pages of testimony, the number of witnesses. There doesn’t need to be a great deal more discussion about whether we should be considering campaign finance reform. The system is broken, it ought to be fixed, and there isn’t just one answer to fix it. There are a number of ideas, probably from both sides of the aisle, that can contribute to an approach that will address this in a way the American people believe we ought to address this issue.

So, this issue is not one that will simply go away. This is not an issue you can bury in the backyard somewhere and forget about it. Every day when you read the newspapers, you see stories, again, about this campaign or that campaign, about this administration or that Member of Congress. The American people, I think soon, will insist to know who in the Congress, in the House and the Senate, contributed to making campaign finance reform a reality and who stood in the way.

I guess the message here is for those who do not want to see any reform of our campaign financing system, our message is to them: Get out of the way, let us at least have a shot on the floor of the Senate in crafting, hopefully, a bipartisan approach, if we can craft it, a campaign finance reform proposal that gives the American people some confidence that the abuses we have read about, the excesses, the exponential growth in campaign spending in this country can come to an end.

I happen to feel very strongly that one of the ingredients that is necessary is spending limits. The Supreme Court had a decision in Buckley versus

Valeo—it was a 5 to 4 decision, I believe—in which they said it is perfectly constitutional to limit political contributions, but it is unconstitutional to limit political expenditures. Far be it for me to speak over the shoulder of the Supreme Court, but, by the same token, I don't understand that logic.

It seems to me, and we have had debate on this on a constitutional amendment just in the last days, it seems to me that part of the answer to this problem is to reasonably limit campaign expenditures for all politicians running for all offices in a fair and thoughtful way. We do not deserve the kind of campaigns that the American people are now getting.

There are other models around the world. I kind of like the British system, where they apparently sound a starting gun, or whatever it is, and for 30 or 45 days, they scramble and wrestle and debate and do whatever you do in campaigns, and the fur flies and the dust is all over, and then the bell goes off and it is over. It is over. Then they vote.

In this country, my Lord, what happens is years in advance of an election now, we have campaign activities cranking up for President and the Senate and Congress, and it never ends. It bores the American people to death, first of all, and second, they have become so long and so expensive, is it any wonder that 50 percent of the American people said when it comes time to casting a vote, they say, "Count me out, I'm not going to participate"?

There are a lot of things we need to do to reform our political system and make it better. It seems to me job one is this issue of reforming the campaign finance system, the method by which all campaigns are financed in this country. The Senator from Illinois is simply saying today, let us have an opportunity, a commitment, a date by which the Senate will consider campaign finance reform. I am pleased to support him, and I hope others in the Senate will do the same. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. ROBERTS). Who seeks time?

Mr. DURBIN addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois is recognized.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, there have been a lot of headlines in the last several weeks of embarrassment to both political parties. There have been a lot of questions asked about the system by which we raise funds at all levels. Questions were raised about the use of a telephone by the Vice President, and I do not know, frankly, what was legal and what was proper in that situation, but we all know that at least two Members of this body have acknowledged that they used their office telephones in campaigns gone by to raise money. They said they will never do it again, as the Vice President has said. But it raises a bipartisan challenge to us in limiting campaign fund-

raising activities in any public building.

There was a question raised as to whether or not an employee at the White House was handed a check for the Democratic National Committee which she then turned over to the committee, and whether that was legal or proper. We know 2 years ago a Republican Congressman on the floor of the House walked around handing out campaign checks from tobacco companies to their favorite candidates, and that, of course, raises a bipartisan question about the propriety of receiving or distributing campaign checks in a public building, on the floor of the House or the Senate. These are all legitimate and bipartisan questions.

This morning's Washington Post raised a question on the front page as to whether a Member of Congress was putting some pressure on a certain group to raise money for him in the last campaign, and the pressure went so far as to suggest that the Ambassador from the country involved was saying, "This is unusual; we have never had this kind of pressure put on us." The same charges are made against the White House: Did they go too far in soliciting contributions? Again, a bipartisan problem and one we clearly should address.

For those who have tunnel vision on this and see all of the sins and wrongdoing only on the Democratic side, I think in all honesty, they know better. We are all guilty of this. We are guilty of this at the congressional level, at the Presidential level, Democrats and Republicans, and to merely turn that spotlight on one group or one party really does not get to the real challenge here. And the real challenge is, will we change the system?

The resolution that I am going to offer says to the Senate, let us make a commitment, both sides of the aisle, that by a time certain, we will bring to this floor campaign finance reform legislation and pass it by a time certain. I do not presume what that might include. I do not presume to suggest that any bill pending might be passed. We might come up with a new work product completely, totally, but I do suggest to you that unless and until we make this commitment to reform the system, the skepticism and cynicism will continue and may increase.

So, Mr. President, on behalf of myself and Senators DORGAN and WELLSTONE, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Senate Resolution 65, a resolution calling on the Senate to commit to bring comprehensive campaign finance reform legislation to the floor by May 31 and to adopt, as a goal, the enactment of such legislation by July 4 of this year; that the resolution be agreed to and the motion to reconsider be laid on the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. NICKLES. Mr. President, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. NICKLES addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma is recognized.

Mr. NICKLES. Did you conclude, I ask my colleague from Illinois?

Mr. DURBIN. Yes.

Mr. NICKLES. I will just make a couple brief comments concerning campaign finance.

One, I share some of the concerns of my colleague from Illinois. I will be happy to work with him. I did object to the resolution saying we wanted to have it done by May 31 or July 4. But I am committed to making campaign reform. And I will work with my colleague and friend from Illinois and others to try and see if we cannot come up with a bipartisan package that would do just that.

It may not include everything that everybody has been talking about, but it will be constitutional, and, hopefully, may be passable through both Houses. It may not include everything. We may have to pass a couple pieces of legislation before we are done. But I have been charged with the responsibility on this side to try to put together a package that is saleable. I will work with my colleague and friend from Illinois to try to make that happen.

Mr. DURBIN. Will the Senator yield?

Mr. NICKLES. I will be happy to.

Mr. DURBIN. I thank my colleague from Oklahoma for his statement. And it may be progress. I hope it is.

Would the Senator be kind enough to tell me his thoughts as to whether or not we should accomplish significant and meaningful campaign finance reform this year so that the 1998 election cycle can be a cleaner, perhaps better managed election with more interest and participation by our voters across the country?

Mr. NICKLES. I will be happy to tell my colleague, if you are asking me what the effective date of the legislation will be, I am not sure. But I do think that we have an interest, and I would say a bipartisan interest, in trying to do some things together: Greater disclosure, trying to make sure that nobody is forced or compelled to contribute to any campaign against their will, maybe making some change in contribution limits, increasing individual limits, maybe reducing other limits. Possibly we can get a bipartisan coalition on that, and doing a few other things that we might be able to get agreement on.

But the effective date, well, that would be one of the things we will have to wrestle with. That is a challenge. Some of those things for disclosure, I expect could be effective certainly for the 1998 election. If you changed individual contributions, which I am contemplating offering as one suggestion, whether that should be effective immediately or effective post the 1998 election is something we will have to discuss.

Mr. DURBIN. Will the Senator yield further?

Mr. NICKLES. Yes.

Mr. DURBIN. Could the Senator give me some assurance by the majority leadership that this issue should come to the floor this calendar year?

Mr. NICKLES. I will just tell my colleague, I have been charged with the responsibility of trying to make sure that we are ready to do that. It is my hope and expectation that we will be ready to do that—not tie this down to a particular timetable—but I hope that we will be able to do it in the not-too-distant future. Maybe we will be able to meet the timeframe as suggested by my colleague from Illinois. I am not ready to give a date. But you are saying for this year. I hope that will be the case.

Mr. DURBIN. If the Senator would further yield.

I will return and my colleagues will return with similar resolutions in the hopes that we can reach a bipartisan agreement for a timetable to consider this issue. Absent that agreement, many of us are afraid that we will once again fall into this morass of hearings and speeches and a lot of jawboning and very little progress on the subject. I hope that my colleague from Oklahoma will join me in that effort.

Mr. NICKLES. I thank my friend.

VICTIM RIGHTS CLARIFICATION ACT OF 1997

Mr. NICKLES. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of H.R. 924 just received from the House.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The clerk will report.

The bill clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 924) to amend title 18, United States Code, to give further assurance to the right of victims of crime to attend and observe the trials of those accused of the crime.

The Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. NICKLES. Mr. President, I wish to thank my colleague and friend, Senator LEAHY, for his cooperation in bringing this bill to the floor. As I mentioned, the House passed this bill yesterday. It was by a vote of 418 to 9.

I also want to thank my colleagues, Senator HATCH, Senator INHOFE—who is an original cosponsor of this legislation with me—Senator GRASSLEY and Senator KENNEDY and their staffs for working together with our staff to make this bill possible.

And I want to thank the bipartisan and bicameral cooperation that we have had because we have negotiated with the House, came up with similar legislation to correct, I think, a mistake, a problem.

Mr. President, we introduce this legislation on behalf of the victims of the Oklahoma City bombing and other victims of crime. This legislation will clarify the rights of victims to attend and observe the trial of the accused and also testify at the sentencing hearing.

The Victim Rights Clarification Act is necessary because a Federal judge interpreted his sequestration power as authorizing the exclusion of victims of crime from trial who will only be witnesses at sentencing. The district judge presiding over the Oklahoma City bombing case basically gave the victims and their families two choices. They could attend the trial and witness the trial—or in this case we have closed-circuit TV for the families, since the trial is actually in Denver and many of the families are in Oklahoma City. So they have closed-circuit TV. They have two options: They can view the trial in Denver or in Oklahoma City, or they could participate in the sentencing phase of the trial.

Most of the families of the victims wanted to do both—or many wanted to do both. They should not have had to make that decision. This legislation will clarify that.

Such rulings as the judge made extend sequestration far beyond what Congress has intended. The accused has no legitimate basis for excluding a victim who will not testify during the trial. Congress thought it already adopted a provision precluding such sequestration in the victims' bill of rights. This bill clarifies the pre-existing law so it is indisputable that district courts cannot deny victims and surviving family members the opportunity to watch the trial merely because they will provide information during the sentencing phase of the proceedings.

This bill also applies to all pending cases and in no way singles out a case for unique or special treatment. Rather, a serious problem has come to light and Congress has responded by clarifying the applicable Federal law across the country from this day forward.

The U.S. Supreme Court has specifically upheld the power of Congress to make "changes in law" that apply even in pending cases. In *Robertson versus Seattle Audubon Society*, a unanimous court explained that Congress can "modify the provisions at issue" in pending and other cases. This bill makes it clear that Federal crime victims will not be denied the chance to watch the court proceedings simply because they wish to be heard at sentencing.

This bill will be enforced through normal legal channels. Federal district courts will make the initial determination of the applicability of the law. In disputed cases, the courts will hear from the Department of Justice, counsel for the affected victims, and counsel for the accused. If the district court persists in denying a victim the right to observe a trial in violation of the law, both the Department of Justice and the victims can seek appellate review through the appropriate pleadings.

Once again, Mr. President, this is an important piece of bipartisan legislation that will clarify the intent of Congress with respect to a victim's right to attend and observe a trial and testify at sentencing.

I very much appreciate the support of my colleagues in both the Senate and the House who have made this bill possible today. I am very grateful for their assistance. I know that I am speaking on behalf of hundreds of victims and the families in Oklahoma City, that they are grateful for this legislation, and a special thank you to my colleagues, Senator INHOFE and Senator LEAHY and Senator KENNEDY and Senator HATCH, for making this bill possible.

I yield the floor.

Mr. LEAHY addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont is recognized.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I am pleased to join my friends, Mr. HATCH, the two Senators from Oklahoma, and Senator GRASSLEY, as an original cosponsor of the Victim Rights Clarification Act of 1997.

I am glad we are considering and passing this important legislation. They are doing this in an expeditious and bipartisan manner.

Two of the most important rights Congress can safeguard for crime victims are the right to witness the trial of the accused and the right to be heard in connection with the sentencing decision. The Victim Rights Clarification Act is not the first time Congress has addressed these two ideas. In 1990, we passed the Victims' Rights and Restitution Act, providing that crime victims shall have the right to be present in all public court proceedings related to the offense, unless the court determines the testimony by the victim would be materially affected.

In the Violent Crime Control Act of 1994, Congress included several victims' rights provisions. For instance, we amended rule 32 of the Federal Rules of Criminal Procedure to require Federal judges at the sentencing for crimes of violence or sexual assault to determine if the victim wishes to make a statement.

Last year, we enacted the Televised Proceedings for Crime Victims Act as part of the Antiterrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act of 1996. That responded to the difficulties created for victims of the Oklahoma City bombing.

Mr. President, I think this is important because so often what we set in the criminal procedures in the Federal court are then adopted by the State courts. During my days as a prosecutor, I felt victims should have complete access to the court during a trial and that victims should be heard upon sentencing. Frankly, I found many times when the person being sentenced had suddenly gotten religion, had suddenly become a model person, usually dressed in a better suit and tie than I wore as a prosecutor and was able to cry copious tears seeking forgiveness and saying how it was all a mistake, sometimes reality came to the courtroom.